

Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership

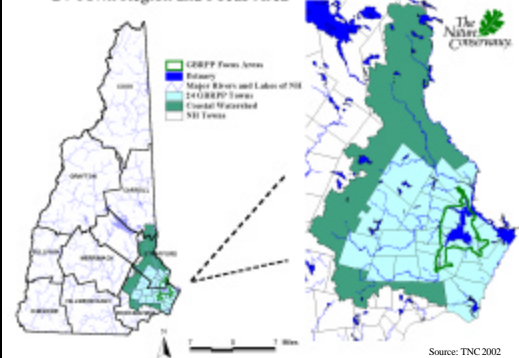
A Partnership Demonstrating Conservation Success

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State of the Estuaries Conference
October 20 & 21, 2003
Portsmouth, NH



Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership 24 Town Region and Focus Area



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Partners Protecting New Hampshire's Great Bay Habitat

The Partnership is a group of organizations committed to protecting the important habitats of the Great Bay region.

Partnership Background: Organizational Structure

- The Partnership consists of statewide & local-regional private nonprofit conservation organizations, land trusts, federal and state public agencies and municipalities.
- 9 Principal Partner oversee the ongoing activities:
 - Audubon Society of NH
 - Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
 - Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
 - NH Department of Fish and Game
 - The Nature Conservancy, NH Chapter
 - Society for the Protection of NH Forests
 - US Environmental Protection Agency
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service
 - US Natural Resources Conservation Service

Organizational Structure...

- **The Nature Conservancy**
 - Serves as lead applicant for grants, financial agent, negotiator-land agent
- **Great Bay Coordinator**
 - Works for the 9 Principal Partners, coordinating regional activity and communication
- **Landowners**
 - Work voluntarily with Partnership in land protection and restoration.
- **Community Partners**
 - Municipalities, local-regional conservation organizations. Assist in development and implementation of projects

Partnership Background Goals: A Collaborative Effort

- Promote creative solutions for habitat protection.
- Build upon the conservation efforts of already protected and restored areas.
- Coordinate resources, and identify and pursue a variety of funding opportunities.
- Promote communication and cooperation between partnering entities.

Partnership Background: Origin

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan: established the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture and the Great Bay Focus Area.
- North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), 1989: enacted to assist with the conservation of wetland systems for wildlife in the Joint Venture Focus Areas.

Partnership Background: Funding 1994 - 2003

- North American Wetland Conservation Act
 - \$3.15 million in grant funds, 4 grants
 - Matched 2:1 with other sources of funds
 - Another \$1 million pending
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
 - \$36.8 million in grants (1996 – 2003)
- The Nature Conservancy Private Funds
 - \$4.4 million donations
- Other Match
 - \$5.41 million, value of protected land and easements
 - \$~50,00 In-kind professional services to date
 - \$30,000 Restoration funds
 - More NAWCA match associated with pending grant

Partnership Background: Planning Documents

- **Identification of important habitats** in the Great Bay Focus Area using a geographic information system. GBRPP 1996.
- Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership **habitat protection plan**; Great Bay New Hampshire Focus Area, Atlantic Coast Joint Venture of NAWMP. GBRPP 1997, 2000.
- **Ecological assessment** of selected towns in the Great Bay Area. NH Heritage 1997.
- **Conservation plan** for the Great Bay Region. TNC 1997.
- Crommet Creek and Great Bay **management plan**, Great Bay Focus Area, New Hampshire. GBRPP 2000.
- An assessment of **natural communities and significant wildlife habitat** in selected focus areas in the Piscassic River Watershed. TNC 2002.

Partnership Background: Planning Documents funded by

- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- New Hampshire Estuaries Project
- NH Office of State Planning
- NH Department of Environmental Services
- Great Bay Stewards and others

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GIS-Determined Significant Habitats Based on:

- Migratory and resident birds
- Federally listed rare species
- State listed rare species
- Species monitored by NHNH
- Migratory fish runs
- Wetlands
- Unfragmented "natural lands"
- Conservation lands

Great Bay Landscape

- Agricultural, wetlands, and forests
- Pine-oak-hemlock forest cover types
- Flat, slightly rolling topography
- Enriched marine clay-soils and bedrock
- Diverse microtopography
- Vernal pools
- Multiple rare or uncommon plants, animals, and natural communities
- Diverse wildlife habitat

Great Bay Waterscape

- >700 mi² (>450,000 acre) combined watershed area
- Fed by 5 major rivers: Lamprey, Exeter/Squamscott, Winnicut, Oyster, Bellamy
- 8.7 mi² (5,500 ac) at high tide; 4.2 mi² (2,700 ac) at low tide
- Tidal flush every 18 days (36 tide cycles)
- 2,585 acres eel grass beds
- 1,202 acres mudflats
- 840-1,020 acres high and low salt marsh
- 100 miles of high-tide shoreline
- Average depth = 9 feet; 58 foot maximum depth

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Waterfowl

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Shorebirds

Wading birds

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Other Habitats

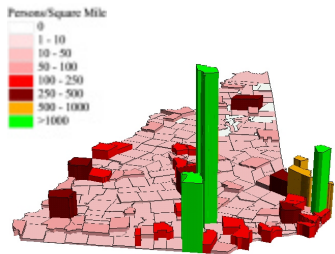
- Uplands
- Overwintering habitats
- In-water habitats

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Threats at Great Bay

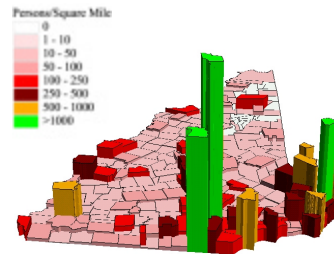
- Rockingham County population expected to double 1998-2020
- 1990-1997, Rockingham County had 27% of all NH's housing starts
- By 2020, local towns will lose 10-20% of their forest cover (most forest loss projected in NH)
- 1982-1997, Rockingham County lost 20% of its farmland to development (Strafford Cty lost 17% in same time period)
- The majority of known rare or declining species and natural communities *do not* occur on conservation land
- Pollution from **Point Sources** have improved over time; but **Non-Point Sources** of water pollution are expected to increase with development

1950 Population Density



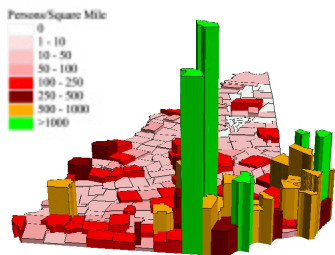
Source: SPNHF, TNC 1999

1970 Population Density



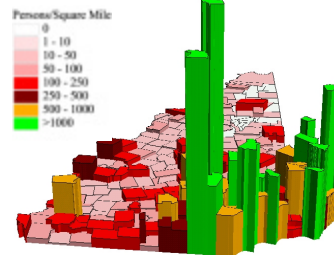
Source: SPNHF, TNC 1999

1998 Population Density



Source: SPNHF, TNC 1999

2020 Population Density (Projected)



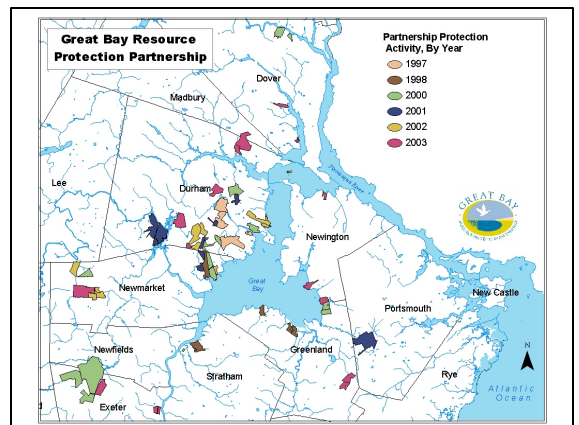
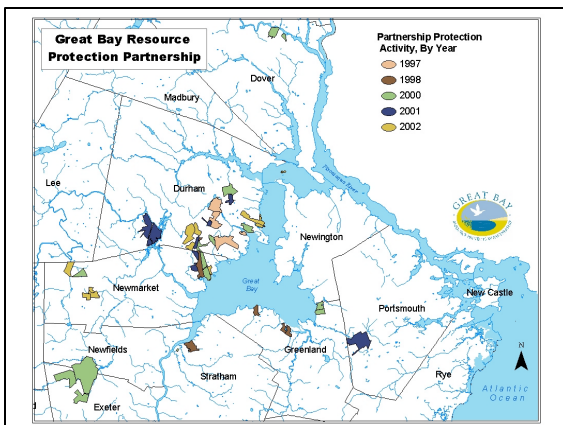
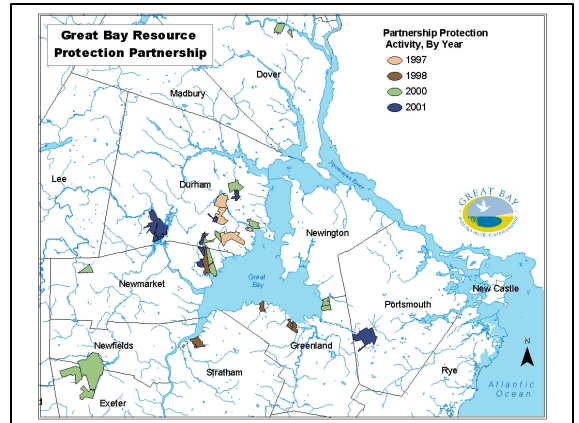
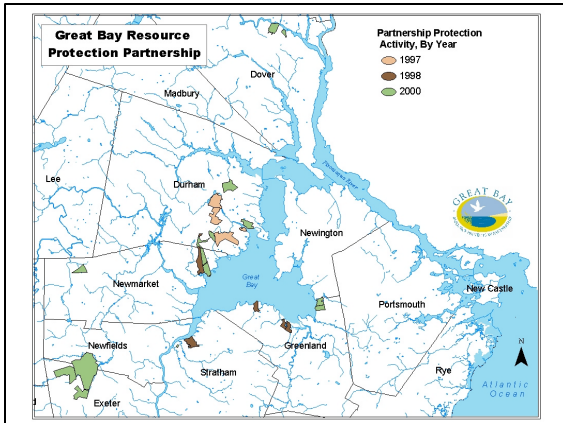
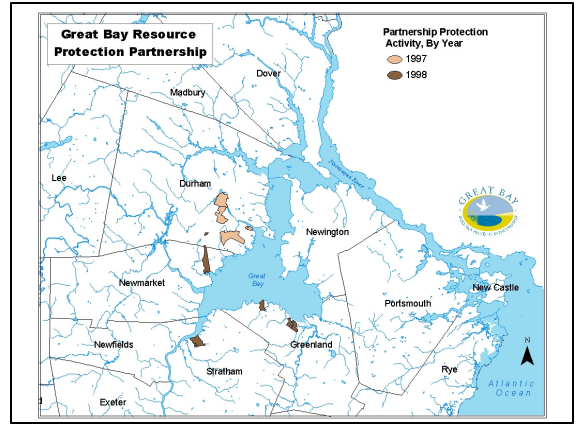
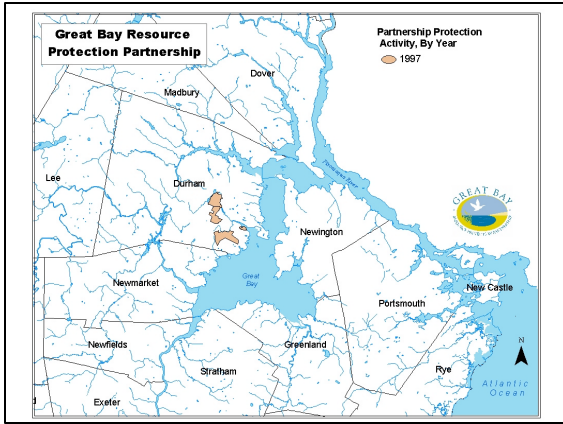
Source: SPNHF, TNC 1999

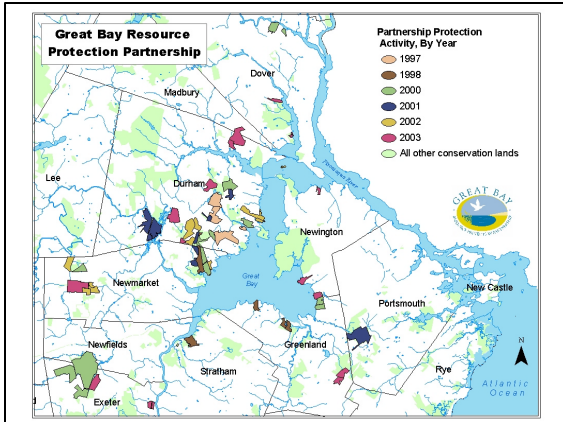
Outreach and Education

- Technical Assistance
 - Workshops
 - Community Meetings
 - Conservation Issues
- Identify Shared Opportunities
 - Networking
 - Land Protection
 - Restoration
 - Field work
 - Funding

Land Protection: Accomplishments 1994 - 2003

- Partnership protected acres: ~3,700
 - # Properties: 42
- Match acres (NAWCA grants): 1,531
 - # Properties: 27
- Total Partnership acres: 4,314
 - # Properties: 69
- “Prospects”: ~2,000 acres; ~35 landowners





Stewardship

- Management and Ownership Decision Making
- Landscape Scale Management Plans
 - Guidelines for Project Area management coordination and individual property management
- Individual Property Management Plans
- Implementation
 - Community Stewards
- Wetlands Restoration Opportunities

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Elements of Success: Partnerships & Landscape Scale Conservation Efforts

- Pool Resources
 - \$
 - Expertise
 - Information
 - Staff
 - Volunteers
 - Contacts
- Sustainable Effort
 - Buy-in; local to federal level
 - Integrated, comprehensive approach
 - Minimize duplicative efforts. Offers coordinated approach; less confusing to public
 - Economically feasible, politically popular

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Keys to Partnership Success: Collaboration

- Agree on Conservation Target Areas
 - Do your homework (Plan!)
 - Set goals and revisit them
- Consensus Decision Making
 - Communication
 - Common Ground – “leave bowling shirt at the door”
- Share & Coordinate Resources
 - Professional Expertise
 - Contacts
 - Funding

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